Socialism and Anarchism in Early Republican China

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Socialism has been a visible issue in Chinese ideological conflicts continuously since 1905, when socialist policies were first incorporated into the political agenda of the Revolutionary Alliance. In the early years of the Republic, the issue was kept alive by the efforts of two remarkable men, Jiang Kanghu (1883-1945) and Liu Sifu (1884-1915), the one a socialist, the other an anarchist. They and the groups they led were marginal in contemporary politics. But the ideas they advocated seemed dangerous enough to the authorities to warrant official persecution. Their writings and activities contributed significantly to the propagation of socialism after 1919, when socialism came into its own in China.

This article seeks to elucidate differences in the socialist and anarchist conceptions of revolution in the early Republic. These differences provoked the first polemics among Chinese socialists

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in 1914, when Liu launched ideological attacks against Jiang and other competitors on the left. The polemics made no apparent impact on Chinese political thinking at this time; after the establishment of the Republic in 1912, the attention of most politically active Chinese was drawn to the new experiment with party politics, and few seemed interested in abstract ideological issues. Even members of the Guomindang, who had earlier deemed socialism relevant to the Chinese revolution, abandoned interest in incorporating socialist programs into their party platform; socialism had already proven to be controversial among revolutionaries and might, therefore, undercut party efforts to acquire political power, which was the main concern of the day.

Nevertheless, this first controversy over the nature of social revolution is important because it reveals what socialism meant to the Chinese in the early years when it was still a peripheral and largely visionary current in Chinese politics. It raised issues, moreover, that would continue to divide anarchists and other socialists in later years. Some of these issues, particularly those concerning the nature of political power and the appropriate revolutionary strategy to achieve the socialist vision, have been universal issues of socialism. Specifically, the controversy revealed two opposing versions of socialism. Anarchists advocated a revolutionary socialism that called for the total, revolutionary transformation of society on the grounds that existing society was founded on the perversion of the most basic human instincts and the betrayal of the human promise. Their targets were the proponents of a socialism divorced from revolution who held that existing society could be ameliorated through the institution of appropriate "social policies" *(shehui zhengce)*; it was not necessary to overthrow existing institutions but rather to employ them to eliminate inequality and injustice.

Neither anarchism nor socialism was new in China when the Republican revolution erupted in 1911. Chinese had been aware of socialism since around the turn of the century, and a number of Japanese works on socialism and anarchism had been translated into Chinese beginning in 1903. Socialism had even become an

issue in the revolutionary thought of the period among Chinese intellectuals abroad. In 1905, when the Revolutionary Alliance incorporated in its program a plan to "equalize the land" with the general goal of achieving socialism, it was attacked by Liang Qichao, who believed that socialism was irrelevant to China's problems. The ensuing debate lasted for more than a year. Just as that debate was winding down, Chinese intellectuals in Paris and Tokyo established two anarchist societies. The New Era Society, established in Paris, followed a Kropotkinite anarchism with emphasis on science and progress. Its publication, *The New Era (Xin shiji)* published a great deal of material on the European revolutionary movement and translated into Chinese numerous works by anarchists during the three years of its existence. The Society for the Discussion of Socialism *(Shehui zhuyi jiangxi hui)*, established in Tokyo, advocated an antimodernist, Tolstoyan type of anarchism in its journal, *The Heavenly Justice (Tianyi bao)*. The information and translations made available in these two journals were to serve as the major source of the Chinese Left's knowledge of European socialism until the twenties.

Anarchism and the socialism advocated by the Revolutionary Alliance were the two currents in Chinese socialist thinking that dominated social revolutionary thought before 1919. Anarchists called for a total revolution that would touch all aspects of life. Their goal was to abolish the very idea of interest in society, so as to allow free play to the instinct for cooperation which they believed to be natural to humankind. While this was easily confounded with traditional Chinese beliefs in the natural goodness of humanity, as we will discuss below, anarchists, especially the Paris anarchists, were very much against traditional Chinese culture, which they believed had been built on selfishness. Their attacks on traditional beliefs, and institutions such as the family, anticipated by a decade issues that would become prominent in Chinese thought in the late 1910s. Revolutionary Alliance socialism was, by contrast, a social-policy socialism that sought a revolutionary transformation of society through state policy. Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yatsen) had been greatly impressed

by the social divisions he had observed in Europe which, he believed (as did many Europeans of the time) were products of the unbridled development of the capitalist market economy. His intention, in advocating socialism, was to take precautions against the emergence of such divisions in China as China industrialized. Control of private interest through state policies, he believed, was the key to achieving a peaceful social revolution in China.

Jiang Kanghu and Liu Sifu (as well as some of their followers) were weaned on these intellectual currents. Born within a year of one another, both men were from elite families, and had received their early education in the Confucian classics before turning to Western education. Like many elite Chinese of their day, they were alienated from the values they had been nourished upon in their childhood as the Confucian social and political system repeatedly demonstrated its inability to accommodate the radical changes that China needed to undergo in order to survive in a new, Western-dominated world. But there the similarities ended. They were quite different in temperament. Jiang, "vain, opportunistic and volatile," as one biographer has described him, was quite obviously obsessed with power, and spent most of his life on the fringes of political power, a leader in search of followers. Liu, better known by his later adopted name Shifu, was intense, serious and single-minded, with an uncompromising personality. If the image we have of Jiang is of the vainglorious opportunist, never able to break with the powers that he challenged, the image Shifu left behind was that of the paradigmatic revolutionary who impressed others most for his sincerity in practicing what he preached.

Their careers, too, were very different. Jiang was never a revolutionary, though he gained early prominence for his advocacy of progressive causes, particularly in the areas of women's equality and education. In the early 1900s, he did educational work under Yuan Shikai, promoted women's schools, and taught at the Imperial University in Beijing (later Beijing University). He was exposed to socialism in 1907-1910, when he went abroad to study, first in Japan and then in Europe. While he was in Europe,

he came to know the Paris anarchists, and contributed two articles to the *New Era*. There is considerable evidence in his later writings that he learned at least some of his socialism from that publication. Nevertheless, when he began to propagate socialism, it was more along antirevolutionary social-policy lines, even though his policies differed from those of Sun Zhongshan and the Revolutionary Alliance.

Liu's career was that of the revolutionary. He was exposed to radical ideas when he went to Japan to study in 1904-1906. There he participated in the establishment of the Revolutionary Alliance. It was also in Japan, most likely, that he learned about anarchism. At this time, Chinese knowledge of anarchism was vague, not distinguished clearly from Russian nihilism, and viewed as "extreme revolutionism." It was associated more with a technique of political action—assassination—than with a social philosophy. In an environment where there was little means of political expression and no social basis for revolutionary action, youthful revolutionaries discovered in individual action a means of expression that caught their imagination. Individual acts of political expression, even when their political futility was evident, served to affirm revolutionary authenticity. The heroic tradition in Chinese politics provided one source of legitimacy for this kind of political behavior; the "extreme revolutionism" of Russian populists and other Western revolutionaries provided another. Thus it was to assassination that Liu turned over the next few years. In 1907, he lost one of his hands in an accidental explosion, then spent the next two years in prison. It was probably not until 1910-1911 that he turned seriously to familiarizing himself with the anarchist literature that issued from Paris and Tokyo. By 1912, he considered himself an anarchist. Having discovered anarchist social theory, he renounced assassination, abandoned politics, and turned to the propagation of anarchist ideas.

Jiang returned to China from Europe in late 1910, still relatively unknown. What brought him national prominence was a lecture he gave on July 1, 1911, in Hangzhou, which was probably the first public lecture on socialism ever to be given in China. Entitled "Socialism and Women's Education," the lecture

was more radical for its statements on women and the family than for what it said on socialism. It seemed radical enough to the governor of the Zhejiang province, who thought it to be as dangerous as "flood waters and wild beasts," and petitioned the throne to punish Jiang. Jiang was able to escape punishment thanks to the intercession of his highly placed acquaintances. But the incident brought him national fame. The same month he organized the Socialist Research Society *(Shehui zhuyi yanjiu hui),* which became the core of the Chinese Socialist Party *(Zhongguo shehui dang),* China's first socialist organization, established in November 1911, barely a month after the uprising that was to bring down the monarchy by the end of the year. The Chinese Socialist Party announced an eight-point program: support the Republic; abolish racial boundaries; reform the law and respect the individual; destroy the system of inheritance; organize public organs to spread equal education; promote productive industries and stimulate laborers; abolish all taxes but the land tax; limit military spending and encourage competition other than the military (to provide an outlet for the human urge to compete) [Jiang, 1913: 53-55].

Until it was proscribed in 1913, the Chinese Socialist Party propagated socialist ideas in China through lectures and publications. At its height, it claimed 200 branches and 400 thousand members. These figures were no doubt inflated, but Bernal has confirmed a large membership for the party in eastern China. What these members knew about socialism is another matter. Jiang himself remarked that most were quite ignorant of socialism and, judging by his own knowledge, there is little reason to doubt his word. The party was diffuse, more a study group than a political party, and its members included anarchists as well as social democrats, which accounted for the split in late 1912.

Meanwhile, in the atmosphere of freedom provided by the revolutionary events of 1911-1912, anarchists also began to organize their own groups. The Paris anarchists returned to China in January 1912 and established the Society to Advance Morality *(Jin de hui).* Another prominent anarchist, Cai Yuanpei, established the Six No's Society *(Liu bu hui),* after the six

behavioral injunctions in its program. The names of these societies reveal the moralistic inclinations of the Chinese anarchists. This was also the case with the group that Shifu organized a few months later, the Conscience Society *(Xin she).* Liu's final conversion to anarchism, and the founding of the Conscience Society, carried all the overtones of a religious conversion, and actually took place in a Buddhist monastery at West Lake in Hangzhou. The covenant of the Conscience Society imposed sumptuary regulations on its members and proscribed, among other things, marriage, political participation, and the use of family names. It was on this occasion that Liu adopted the name Shifu, giving up his own surname.

After returning to their native place in Guangzhou, members of the group turned to more overt public activities under the name of the Cock-Crow Society *(Huiming xueshe).* The activities of the society consisted mostly of the compilation and publication of anarchist works first published in the *New Era* and the *Heavenly Justice.* At the same time, it began to publish its own journal, the *Cock-Crow Record (Huiming lu),* which after its second issue was changed to *People's Voice (Min sheng).* Until Shifu's death in May 1915, this society and its publications provided the foundation for anarchist activity in China. Unlike Jiang's farflung and diffuse Chinese Socialist Party, Shifu's group was small and tightknit, consisting mostly of relatives and close friends, and restricted to Guangzhou except for a number of exchanges and subscriptions through the mail. In 1914, the group was forced to move to Shanghai under pressure from the authorities. There Shifu founded the Society of Anarchist-Communist Comrades *(Wuzhengfu gongchanzhuyi tongzhi hui),* but the membership remained small. Nevertheless, Shifu's followers, unlike Jiang's, were intensely devoted to him, and continued to spread his ideas for years after his death.

JIANG KANGHU'S SOCIALISM

Jiang's socialism was often contradictory and confusing. This arose partially out of his failure to offer a systematic exposition of

his views; he explained his socialism for the most part in public lectures, and his emphases varied with his audiences. As Shifu was to point out, however, he also suffered from considerable confusion over the goals and means of socialism. Even when he presented his ideas more systematically in the 1920s, a good bit of confusion remained. Nevertheless, his views were not without an inner logic, and most of the contradictions are traceable to his eclectic view of socialism.

Like other socialists, Jiang saw social revolution as the essence of socialism. The declaration of the Chinese Socialist Party observed: "People's armies have arisen. They undertake racial revolution, speak of political revolution. But politics is the expression of society. Therefore, social revolution is the basis of all affairs" (Jiang, 1913: 53-54). In a piece he published in San Francisco in 1914, after he had left China, he sounded an even more radical note:

> The faith of the people is gone in Republicanism. Their belief that it was the Manchus only who were oppressive is shattered. There remains but one thing. THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION. That and that only can bring relief to the toiling millions of China. Their only hope lies in this: The taking over of the entire mechanism of production and operation of it by the workers for the workers—the Socialist or Industrial Republic (sic) [Jiang, 1914: 23; capitals in the original].

Despite such rhetorical flourishes, Jiang's idea of social revolution did not imply political violence. In the declaration of the Socialist Research Society, he described socialism as "an ideology of peace and happiness, not a radical or dangerous one; a constructive, not a destructive, ideology," and blamed the occurrence of violence in socialist history on the persecution to which socialists were continually subjected (Jiang, 1913: 26). He also described the socialism of this society as a "non-extremist" one (p. 27). Statements such as the one above were meant for the consumption of a particular audience or, at best, expressed a temporary mood; for they were out of tune with his basic social philosophy.

While revolutionary politics was not integral to Jiang's idea of social revolution, he did envision the revolutionization of society on a long-term basis. In this respect, his advocacy of social revolution was not different from that of Sun Zhongshan and the Revolutionary Alliance, which was intended to forestall violence in society, not to initiate it. Like Revolutionary Alliance socialists, moreover, Jiang believed that China did not yet suffer from the deep social divisions and exploitation that characterized Western society and thus could avoid violence and achieve socialism with greater ease than Western societies (Jiang, 1913: 18). On another occasion, he observed that most socialists, including social democrats, thought violence was necessary to achieve socialism, but he refused to endorse it himself (p. 40).

Indeed, much as Sun and Revolutionary Alliance socialists did, Jiang believed that socialism, rather than threatening the Republican order, would fulfill the promise of Republican government. Western societies had fallen short of the ideals of equality and democracy because they had failed to institute socialism; he believed that democracy could not be realized without socialism (Jiang, 1913: 41). For the same reason, he argued, socialism needs Republicanism; otherwise the collectivization of property would lead to despotism (p. 97; Min Yi, 1907: 102). Specifically, for China, he argued that it was necessary to bolster Republican institutions with socialist policies in order to overcome the despotism of state and family, as well as to counteract internal and external oppression (Jiang, 1913: 43-44). In his defense of the Chinese Socialist Party before the government, he argued that socialism served the cause of the state and the development of the economy, including commerce, industry and taxation (pp. 76-77). In other words, his socialism was meant not just to further the cause of justice but to strengthen the nation. That this was not mere toadying before the government can be seen from similar arguments he presented to Shanghai merchants to induce them to support his party. Above all, however, Jiang bolstered his arguments with the observation that socialism represented the new tide of world politics. China could close its doors to socialism only at the risk of deviation from the mainstream of progress (p. 44).

Jiang's socialism consisted of a vague humanitarianism that sought not so much to guarantee equality as to provide for equality of opportunity; it was intended, above all, to clear away institutional and ideological obstacles to equality inherited from the past. Indeed, when he did define socialism, he defined it vaguely as "humanitarianism" (p. 82) or "the pursuit of common welfare and happiness for humankind" (p. 15). "Socialism," he explained,

> is the ideology of great unity *(datong)*, not of differentiation. [It] does not heed racial, national or religious boundaries. [All is] for the public good, not the self; [all are] treated with equal benevolence. [All will enjoy] absolute equality, absolute freedom, absolute love [p 26].

Jiang's vision of the good society was possibly inspired by his readings in the *New Era,* for it did have anarchist overtones. He observed in one of his essays that humanity was "naturally" evolving toward a "world socialism" when there would be no state, race, family or religion, and the only distinctions between people would be those of learning and profession. In such a society there would be no need for customs duties or military expenditure. Old views of politics, law, livelihood, and old customs would be transformed until no obstacles divided the individual from the world. Such a world would be governed without action. Jiang concluded that this was the world dreamed of by the anarchists, the world of the "great unity" of Confucius, the Heaven of the Christians and the Paradise of the Buddhists (p. 41). As this last statement suggests, Jiang also viewed socialism as merely the latest manifestation of a longing for good society that was a common heritage of humankind, with an especially long history in China.

All this, however, lay in the future. "Pure" or "strict" socialism, which he identified with communism, was not on the agenda for the present; therefore, he preferred to advocate a "broad" socialism which he believed was consistent with contemporary political organization. One of the reasons he gave for advocating

broad rather than strict socialism was the respectably academic but politically lame reason that until knowledge of socialism acquired greater depth, it was impossible to say which was the most desirable; insisting on one type or another would only create sectarianism (Jiang, 1913: 4). Jiang did not believe that China's workers were yet mature enough to create socialism; and as socialism required the participation of workers, at present it would be best to propagate, rather than try to institute, socialism.

Jiang's eclectic interpretation of socialism allowed him considerable leeway in the socialism he advocated for China. Of all the currents in socialist thought, he believed himself to be closest to social democracy, which he viewed as being akin to communism, a transitional stage on the way to the ideal society described above. But even this does not adequately convey his efforts to reconcile different kinds of socialism. In a letter he wrote to the government in December 1912 to protest the proscription of the Pure Socialist Party (the splinter group from his own party), he undertook a survey of socialism, in which he divided socialists into the following schools: philosphers', scientists', political scientists', ecclesiatics', educationalists', laborers', state, anarchist-communist, individualist, Esperanto, and single-tax socialist. He then went on to describe his own views as follows:

> What I hope for, what I advocate, is derived from the thought of philosophers, based on science, adopts the spirit of the ecclesiastics and the attitude of the educationalists, and grasps the affairs of laborers. It holds on, on the one hand, to radical Republicanism, and, on the other hand, to a progressive collectivist system [which he had earlier equated with communism]. [It seeks to] eliminate taxes and the military, and stresses education and industry. [It] takes the individual to be the nucleus of society and the world its realm. [It seeks to realize] self-governance for the individual and great unity for the world. This kind of hope, this kind of advocacy, could be called individual socialism; it could also be called world socialism [Jiang, 1913: 97].

Given this eclecticism, Jiang's formal statements about the goals of his socialism tell us little about the main thrust of the

ideas he propagated. His immediate programs for the achievement of socialism, however, are a great deal more revealing. Jiang regarded three policies as fundamental to his socialist program: public education, freedom of occupation, and independence of wealth or the abolition of inheritance. He devoted most attention to the first and the third, which were incorporated into the program of the Chinese Socialist Party.

Public education was the cornerstone of Jiang's socialist program. He considered inequality in education to be the source of all inequality in society: "economic inequality arises from inequality in ability; inequality in ability arises from inequality in education" (Jiang, 1913: 63). In China, education was unequal because it was private, family education; in countries where public education had been instituted, inequality of wealth made for unequal access to education with the result that the rich monopolized education, thereby sustaining economic inequality. Jiang believed that inequality in ability arose not from natural differences but from inequality in access to education. He advocated that every individual be given free education in public schools from birth to maturity. If this could be done, then each individual would gain independence of livelihood, and serve himself or herself as well as society. In a few generations, the inequalities inherited from family background would disappear, and all would be able to seek livelihood in equality (pp. 28-29). The only inequalities to remain would be those of profession and learning, not those of class and wealth. Jiang's emphasis on education, it might be noted, accorded with his belief that social change must start with the individual (p. 9).

Occupational freedom would have a similar effect. If each individual sought an occupation in accordance with his or her talents, the virtuous would seek to advance and the degenerate would not dare to remain idle. Rights and obligations would be harmonized. And since each would exert himself or herself to the utmost, both society and the individual would benefit.

Finally, Jiang viewed inheritance as the "greatest crime in the world" (Jiang, 1913: 106); "the source of all inequality" (p. 30); and advocated what he called "independence of property" *(cai-*

chan duli). Inheritance not only perpetuated inequality, it also had a demoralizing effect on the individual. What a person inherited did not represent his or her labor. Such wealth was not only unjustifiable, but it also nurtured a parasitic dependence on the family. Jiang's solution was that all wealth acquired during the lifetime of an individual should revert to the public coffers at the individual's death so that the members of each generation would have to make a living for themselves. In this way inequality that attended every individual at birth would be eliminated, and greater independence stimulated (pp. 29, 31).

All three items in Jiang's socialist program were informed by his ultimate commitment to the individual as the source and the end of socialism. Jiang even distinguished himself from other socialists on the basis of his emphasis on the individual:

> From beginning to end, I have taken the individual to be the [basic] unit of the world. This is my difference from socialists in general who take society as their only premise. If society is taken as the sole premise, the result is to disdain the individual: trampled upon [in this way], the individual loses worth as the unit [of the world] which, in turn, obliterates the spirit of independence and initiative. [This] reduces the individual to the [level of the] scales of fish and dragons, or the cog in a machine [Jiang, 1913: 31].

Jiang described his individualism as the "new individualism" *(xin gerenzhuyi).* The new individualism, unlike the old individualism which consisted of self-seeking or the search for individual sovereignty, simultaneously stressed the independence and the interdependence of individuals (p. 31). Jiang believed in the possibility of achieving this new individualism more on utilitarian than on ethical grounds. He argued that all people by nature sought to maximize their security and happiness *(an luo).* Since ideas on how to achieve this end differed, however, each person's search for happiness interfered with that of others, so that none felt secure in his or her happiness. Therefore, everyone had to learn that to benefit the self, one must benefit others: "Benefiting the self is the goal of all people; benefiting others is the means to achieving that goal" (p. 35). In order to achieve the new

individualism, Jiang argued, all obstacles that stood between the individual and the world ought to be abolished, particularly religion, the state, and the family (p. 36).

His "new individualism," Jiang believed, rendered his socialism superior to others. He was opposed to the egalitarianism of communism (which he otherwise admired) on two grounds. The ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" left no way of dealing with those who did not contribute according to their ability but simply took advantage of the system. Jiang thought this consequence to be very likely, given human inclinations. Secondly, Jiang was a Social Darwinist in outlook and saw competition as the key to progress. If absolute equality prevailed, he believed that society would stagnate (Jiang, 1913: 28). This was a view that he had expressed as early as 1909 in his defense of free enterprise in his *New Era* article, and it was a view he would hold throughout his career (Xu, 1909a). On these two grounds, he was reluctant to abolish property (as long as it was acquired by individual effort) or unequal remuneration for different kinds and levels of labor. As long as people had incentive, he believed, they would strive to better their lot and the whole society would benefit. What Jiang sought in socialism, as noted above, was independence and equality of opportunity, not egalitarianism.

Jiang's socialism contained much that was unorthodox, even unsocialist, but his arguments were not without a logic of their own. The problems of his socialism are best appreciated in terms of his earlier preoccupations with the family and women's liberation. Jiang was involved in the problems of women's education long before he became a socialist. In his earliest available essays, the problems that preoccupied him were the oppression of women and the means to abolish it. He blamed the family structure for the inferior role women held in society and, long before the New Culture Movement, when the idea became prevalent, described the family as the source of all evils in society (Jiang, 1913: 3). The family suppressed the individuality of women and, by denying them education, rendered them dependent upon males. The cure, he believed, was to educate women

and provide them with professions through which they might gain independence and compete with males on an equal basis. When he turned to advocating socialism, Jiang generalized these problems of women and the family to the whole of humankind. This connection between his socialism and his perceptions of the problems of women might explain why August Bebel's *Woman and Socialism* was a favorite book of his, as Bernal has pointed out, and why the first lecture he ever gave on socialism was essentially a lecture on women's problems. It also explains the peculiarities of his socialist program: his emphasis on the new individualism, on abolishing inheritance, on the need to seek independent livelihood—all ideas which he had articulated first in his discussions of women's problems. Jiang's sōcialism, one is tempted to observe, was more antifamily than anticapitalist in its program.

SHIFU AND ANARCHISM

Shifu was an anarchist-communist, a self-acknowledged disciple of Kropotkin. His ideas on anarchism differed little from those of the *New Era* anarchists. He derived much of his knowledge of anarchism, and the arguments he used in its defense, from the earlier anarchists.

Shifu, too, called for a social revolution in China. There was little ambiguity in his concept of social revolution. Unlike Jiang, but like the earlier anarchists, he drew an uncompromising distinction between social and political revolution. He believed that the social realm of life had little, if anything, to do with the political. He would not even entertain the idea that politics was an appendage to society. Politics, he seemed to believe, was extraneous to society, a force (and a farce, were it not a tragedy) imposed upon society from the outside. Accordingly, he opposed all participation in politics. *New Era* anarchists, too, had opposed political participation and argued that true revolutionary action must be social action (Qian Ye, 1906). Yet, after the 1911 Revolution, one of them, Zhang Ji, had agreed to serve as a

member of parliament. Shifu's criticism of Zhang Ji even brought him into conflict with Wu Zhihui, one of the doyens of anarchism in China (Shifu, 1927: 131-138). In the early days of the Republic, Shifu came to represent opposition to political action, and the defense of a social revolution which was not only distinguished from political revolution but actually sought to abolish politics. "Political revolution is the revolution of heroes, the revolution of a minority," he observed, "social revolution is the revolution of the common people *(pingmin)*, a revolution of the great masses" (p. 170).

Shifu did display some hesitation over the timing of revolution, however. He remarked on one occasion that the revolution could be achieved immediately (Shifu, 1927: 6); but usually his statements on the timing of revolution suggested that it would be some time before a successful anarchist revolution could be launched (p. 170). At present, he believed, only a small vanguard was aware of the necessity and the principles of revolution; most of the people lacked the knowledge that would make them into good anarchists (p. 5). He recommended, for instance, that workers proceed right away to establish syndicates, but he believed that the immediate tasks the syndicates ought to undertake were education of the workers, and the achievement of moderate economic ends such as higher wages and shorter working hours. The fundamental task of overthrowing capitalist society and establishing an anarchist one must await the diffusion of knowledge of anarchism (pp. 81-83).

The immediate task for anarchists was, therefore, to spread the word. This was reflected in Shifu's program for revolutionary action. As he said repeatedly in his writings, he regarded propaganda as the first method. Through newspapers, books and pamphlets, lectures and schools, he said, the teachings of anarchism must be taken to the common people:

> It is essential that a majority of the people be steeped in the brilliance of our doctrines, the perfection of our theories, and the excellence of our future organization, and that labor is humankind's natural duty and mutual aid its inherent virtue [Shifu, 1927: 48].

Shifu then named secondary methods—resistance and disturbances—which could be used to hasten the diffusion of propaganda. The former could take the form of resistance to taxation and military service; it also could include strikes by workers and general strikes. "Disturbances" that might be used included assassination and other forms of political violence. Once the propaganda reached saturation point, "the great revolution of the common people" *(pingmin da geming)* could take place. In this revolution the masses would overthrow the government and the capitalists and make a fresh start in building a new society (Shifu, 1927: 48). The form this society would take, moreover, must be reflected in the organization for revolution, which was the main reason the revolution must be delayed until the people were ready.

Government and the capitalist system were the twin targets of revolution; Shifu described sometimes one, sometimes the other, as the greatest enemy of the people, but to him, they were simply intertwining forms of authority *(qiangquan).* (To those who objected that China did not have any big capitalists, he responded that small capitalists, too, were capitalists.) In the "Proclamation of the Society of Anarchist-Communist Comrades" of July 1914 and "The Goals and Methods of the Anarchist-Communist Party" published later in the same month, he summarized both the objects and the goals of the revolution. The Proclamation stated: "We advocate wiping out the capitalist system to rebuild society as a communist society; and, moreover, not using government to oversee it. Put simply, we advocate absolute freedom in economic and political life" (Shifu, 1927: 53). The Proclamation went on to describe the capitalist system as the greatest enemy of the people and the source of all evil in society. All of the resources of production—land, capital, and machinery —were concentrated in the hands of a few landlords and capitalists, the people were industrial slaves, and all the benefits went to the privileged minority.

The anarchists pledged death to this great evil, eradication of the right to private property, and the return of all the means of production to society. Basing their own action on the principle

"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need," the Society declared its intention to organize a free communist society, without distinction between male and female, with every person contributing to society whatever he or she could. The laborers could draw upon the fruits of their labor for their own needs without any limitations. Although the government claimed to maintain order for the people under the present system, the Proclamation observed, in reality it transgressed against people's freedom. Thus government, too, must be eliminated so that people could enjoy their right to a free life and exercise their ability to govern themselves. The Proclamation then described the differences between the present society and the society envisioned by the anarchists:

> As 'anarchism' takes opposition to authority as its essential principle, our party will completely eradicate and sweep away all the evil systems of present society which have an authoritarian nature, and, operating with the true spirit of freedom, equality and fraternal love, we will reach our ideal society—without landlords, capitalists, leaders, officials, representatives, or heads of families; without armies, prisons, policemen, courts or law; without religion and without the marriage system. At that time there will be in society only freedom, the great principle of mutual aid, and the prosperous happiness of labor [Shifu, 1927: 54].

"The Goals and Methods" stated these ideas in more programmatic form in a list of fourteen points. Space does not permit the reproduction of the program here. Briefly, the program (Shifu, 1927: 45-47) called for

(a) public ownership of the means of production and all the products thereof,
(b) abolition of classes,
(c) abolition of government and all institutions such as laws, police, and the military associated with government,
(d) spontaneous, democratic public associations to coordinate production and distribution,
(e) abolition of marriage, and the public rearing of children,
(f) free public education for all,

(g) labor for all mature adults (twenties to forties), after which they would retire to public retirement homes,
(h) labor to be restricted to two-four hours a day, and to be combined with intellectual-esthetic pursuits,
(i) abolition of all religion and dogma to give free play to the morality of mutual aid, and
(j) an international language with the goal of abolishing all national boundaries.

There was not much in this program that was original with Shifu. Some of the ideas came from Kropotkin's writings, especially *The Conquest of Bread* (which had been translated in the *New Era*), others from writings by other anarchists. Some of the same ideas (on labor, education, family) had been incorporated a few years earlier into a description of utopia by Liu Shipei in the *Heavenly Justice* (Liu, 1907b).

This was, in a sense, true of all of Shifu's ideas, which were distinguished not by their originality but by the passion with which he propagated them. He shared the same basic premise of all anarchists, Chinese or foreign: That human beings had a natural morality which was perverted by the imposition upon them of institutions that fostered social division and oppression. Shifu believed that all human beings were naturally endowed with conscience *(liangxin)* and were inclined by nature to mutual aid and love, as well as labor. Authoritarian institutions blunted these innate inclinations while the institutions of property drove them to selfishness with the result that the pursuit of private ends overshadowed, even obliterated, the pursuit of public goals. This was the source of all conflict and exploitation in society. If these institutions were overthrown, the natural morality of people would reassert itself, and humankind would be able to shed its beastly heritage and enter the realm of true humanity where the moral and the rational would be one and the same, where all the distinctions between self and society would disappear, and where the individual would discover freedom in spontaneous association with others (Shifu, 1927: 1-12).

This premise on the goodness of human nature was not new in Chinese thought. It is evident that some Chinese were drawn to

anarchism because of an affinity they perceived between anarchism and ideals long imbedded in Chinese thought, whether Confucian, Taoist or Buddhist. Liu Shipei thought that the Chinese had an advantage over others in achieving anarchism because of their Confucian and Taoist heritage, which favored restricted government (Liu, 1907a). A series of articles in the *New Era* described the statement on utopia in the ancient Chinese work *Li Yun* (Evolution of Rites) as a depiction of anarchist society, even if the author of the article read into that statement a great deal that was not justified by the original version (Xin shiji, nos. 38-41).

The confounding of anarchism and traditional ideals in many minds seems partly a result of the fact that much of the vocabulary used to describe anarchism was derived from the language of traditional Chinese philosophy, two prominent examples being *datong* (great unity) and *liangxin* (conscience), which were used respectively to describe anarchist utopia and the natural goodness of people. Even more significant may have been the connection between anarchism and Buddhism. Though this subject remains to be studied, there is evidence that some Chinese found an affinity between anarchist and Buddhist universalism. Such was the case with Taixu, a leader of the "pure socialists" who broke with Jiang's party in December 1912. This "revolutionary monk" was attracted to anarchism because he thought it to be similar to the universal love of Buddhism (Taixu, 1971: 32). Some of the elements the anarchists incorporated into their behavioral agenda, such as the injunction against eating meat, were probably of Buddhist inspiration.

Shifu, too, shared some of these idiosyncracies of Chinese anarchism. There is evidence of Buddhist influence on his thought. His Conscience Society was established in an atmosphere permeated by Buddhism, and the Society's twelve-point pledge sounded almost more Buddhist than anarchist (Krebs, 1977: Ch. 5).

But these similarities must not be taken too far. If some Chinese were drawn to anarchism because of its affinity with elements in native thought, others criticized such interpretations

as perversions of anarchism. Shifu was one of the latter. When he defended the possibility of the selflessness of human beings, it was not on the basis of native ideas but Kropotkinite "science." Like the *New Era* anarchists before him, he found nothing but corruption and selfishness in the ideology and institutions of the Chinese tradition. He vehemently rejected any suggestion that anarchism could be compared to anarchistic philosophies of the past such as Taoism. Taoism was negative, he believed, while what he advocated was positive (Shifu, 1927: 18). What he meant was that while Taoists may have rejected government in the name of an eremitic existence, he sought to transform existing society to revolutionize human life as a whole. His distinction was a significant one. Shifu also rejected politics, but what he advocated was not to escape politics but to abolish it. His view of social revolution was informed by a social theory that had nothing in common with traditional political reasoning. And it is always worth remembering, in contemplating any analogy between anarchism and traditional thought, that most other Chinese—who shared this heritage with Shifu—were frightened by what he advocated: a revolution of the people that promised to overthrow existing society in its totality.

ANARCHISM AGAINST SOCIALISM

Shifu's visionary purity about revolution made it inevitable that he would not tolerate any distortion of socialist ideals. Indeed, in 1914, he launched a series of attacks on other socialists in the *People's Voice.* Jiang Kanghu was his main target, but others included in his polemics were Sun Zhongshan and the Pure Socialists. By this time, Sun and Jiang were both out of the country. Those who engaged Shifu in discussion were mostly the Pure Socialists and one or two of Jiang's followers. Jiang himself sent at least one response from the United States, the nature of which can be gleaned from the extensive quotations in the essay Shifu wrote to refute it.[1]

At issue in these polemics was the nature of socialism. In spite of the pedantic nature of the discussion, which often presented the problem at hand as a problem of scholarship, the polemics were motivated mainly by a struggle for intellectual leadership of the Chinese socialist movement. It is clear from many of Shifu's statements that he was irked by the claims of Sun and Jiang to the leadership of socialism in China, and even more distraught by the willingness of many to take them at their word (Shifu, 1927; 32, 191).

Nevertheless, the polemics raised issues of substance that were to divide anarchists and other socialists in ensuing years. Shifu began by questioning whether Sun and Jiang were really socialists. This inevitably led to the question of what constituted socialism, to answer which Shifu (and, to a lesser extent, Jiang) turned to analysis of the terminology and history of socialism. Shifu obviously desired to vindicate his views, but in the process he did much to clear away the terminological confusion that had plagued Chinese socialism for a decade. Most of his criticisms, moreover, were quite justified if not unbiased.

What brought Sun into Shifu's polemics was a lecture Sun had given in 1912 to a gathering of the Chinese Socialist party. In this lecture Sun reiterated his commitment to socialism and elaborated on the socialist program he had advocated since Revolutionary Alliance days: the utilization of Henry George's single-tax policy to equalize landownership and the control of monopolies. He also embarked on a prolonged discourse on socialism, in which he acknowledged Marx as the father of socialism but insisted that Marx's ideas be complemented with George's because George had made equally important contributions to socialism. Sun also described communism as the highest ideal of all socialism, but expressed doubt that people were morally prepared for the realization of that ideal (Sun, 1912).

Shifu attacked Sun and Jiang in the same article. His arguments against the two varied according to the different policies they had proposed, but basically he levied the same charges against both of them. These were, first, that neither Sun nor Jiang advocated social revolution but social policy. They were

not even socialists, he said, because they did not propose to abolish private property, the *sine qua non* of all socialism. Jiang's inheritance scheme and Sun's single-tax policy were both characteristic of state socialism, which was quite a different thing from socialism (as Jiang himself had stated in one of his writings). Secondly, Shifu charged them with ignorance of socialism. Neither of them was clear about the differences between capitalism and socialism, and regularly blended the two. They were not even aware of the differences among socialists, as was evident in Sun's equation of Marx and George, and in Jiang's many statements confounding anarchism, communism, social democracy, and state socialism. Socialists were one in advocating the abolition of private property, Shifu pointed out, but there was a basic difference among socialists over how this goal was to be achieved. Socialists (including Marxists) argued for collectivism, that is, control of property by public organs, namely the state. Only anarchists advocated communism, which meant direct control of property by the people themselves. In Shifu's opinion, Jiang displayed utter ignorance of this fact in his contradictory statements about communism. He also criticized Jiang for his belief in the necessity of competition, which ran counter to the spirit that underlay socialism (Shifu, 1927: 21-32).

Shifu criticized the Pure Socialists for a different reason. The Pure Socialists had broken with Jiang's party because of their anarchist inclinations, and indeed, their program revealed anarchist premises. Shifu was not entirely happy with this program, which displayed certain nativist and nationalist tendencies, but his basic criticism concerned their retention of the word "socialist" in the party's name. If they were anarchists, he insisted, they should call themselves anarchists, not socialists (Shifu, 1927: 34-36).

The debate that ensued revolved around two issues: the nature of socialism and the relationship between socialism and anarchism. To refute his opponents, Shifu drew upon his considerable knowledge of the history of socialism to clarify questions on the evolution of terminology. Briefly, these were his major points: (1) Socialism and anarchism had been separate movements from the

beginning, each with its own origins and development. Jiang was incorrect in his assertion that until Bakunin's split with Marx in 1871, anarchism had been indistinct from socialism. Though Shifu was willing to acknowledge Marx's contributions to socialism, he rejected Jiang's suggestion that Marx was the "pope" of socialism. Shifu himself viewed Marx as a state socialist who had derived most of his collectivist ideas from St. Simon (Shifu, 1927: 232-251). (2) Anarchism was more scientific than Marxism. Marx was a scientific socialist, but Kropotkin had given socialism a firmer scientific basis by demonstrating that mutual aid, rather than struggle, was the key factor in evolution (p. 218). (3) Anarchism was broader in compass than socialism. "Socialism pertains to the economy, anarchism to politics," Shifu stated, meaning that in their quest for economic justice, socialists focused exlusively on the economic realm whereas anarchists also included politics among their targets (p. 15). While all anarchists were of necessity also socialists, therefore, socialists were not anarchists because they were not opposed to government. Hence anarchism contained socialism (pp. 15-16). Shifu rejected the suggestion of one critic that since the concept of society included everything, socialism was the broader concept. Society, he argued, did not cover politics, which was extraneous to it; therefore it was not correct to say that socialism could include anarchism (pp. 211-213).

In rejecting terms such as "extreme socialism," "pure socialism," "non-governing" *(wu zhi)* that had been used to label anarchism, Shifu was able to clarify a number of terminological and conceptual questions about anarchism and to point out its distinctive content. He commented on the meaning of the standard Chinese term for anarchism, *wuzhengfu zhuyi* (literally, "no-governmentalism"), which many took literally as simply the rejection of government and nothing else. Citing the original foreign terminology, Shifu pointed out that the misunderstanding was a matter of translation, and that anarchism included opposition to all forms of authority, not just government. Moreover, he explained, this was only the negative aspect of anarchism. On the positive side, anarchists sought to reorganize

society and establish a totally new kind of society (Shifu, 1927: 147-148).

Shifu's contribution to the discussion, however, went beyond matters of terminology. He was quite justified in his critique of the confusion about socialism in the thinking of Sun and Jiang. His own terminological purity was not so well-founded; anarchists in the West did not dissociate themselves from socialism, and Kropotkin himself used anarchism and socialism interchangeably in his writings. With Sun and Jiang, however, the confusion was basically conceptual. Both men confounded not only different currents in socialism but socialism and capitalism as well. Their ideas on socialism echoed the views of late nineteenth century social reformers who used socialist policies to preserve and improve, not to overthrow, the existing capitalist system. As Shifu pointed out, Sun never quite understood capitalism, and while he was opposed to monopoly capital, he never rejected capitalism as such. That this was an accurate diagnosis is evident in an essay by Hu Hanmin, published a number of years earlier in the *Minbao (People's Journal)*, the Revolutionary Alliance journal, to explain Sun's policies. If Hu's explanation reflected Sun's views, and there is little reason to think it did not, Sun himself advocated equality of opportunity, not an egalitarian socialism (Min Yi, 1907: 102).

The same was true of Jiang's socialism, as we have already noted. Shifu observed in one of his essays that Jiang peddled the ideas of St. Simon in China (Shifu, 1927: 17). While Jiang's own writings did not acknowledge any intellectual debt to St. Simon, there are intriguing resemblances between Jiang's and St. Simon's ideas, especially in his emphasis on the abolition of inheritance, his view that learning should be the only basis for inequality, his stress on professional education, and his insistence on the creation of an "industrial republic" to replace the existing one (Cole, 1953: 40-50). What Jiang insisted upon ultimately was to abolish inherited inequality and give everyone an equal start in life through education, an idea reminiscent of St. Simon, who rejected hereditary inequality but not inequality that resulted from differences in personal effort and learning. Whether or not

Jiang owed his ideas to St. Simon, it is clear that his socialism did condone inequality. In later years, Jiang would change the details of his program but never this basic premise; if anything, he became more sympathetic to capitalists even as he continued to advocate socialism (Jiang, 1923).

The fundamental issue that divided Shifu from Sun and Jiang was the issue of the state. Shifu perceived in the history of socialism a basic division around this issue. To him, only anarchists included the state among the targets of revolution. Socialists on the other hand recognized a postive function for the state in the revolution. In his eyes, this compromised their professions of commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society. The state, as the foremost manifestation of authority, could not serve as the vehicle to abolish inequality. His opposition to politics followed similar reasoning. Political (in contrast to social) action implied acceptance of the political space of which the state was a fundamental component. The goal of political action by definition must be the achievement of political power. Rather than abolish the state, therefore, socialist politics—like all politics—must end up affirming its existence, since the state was but the institutionalization of power. Thus, for Shifu, politics only served to perpetuate a basic source of inequality and oppression in society.

Shifu pointed to a basic flaw in the socialism of Jiang and Sun: their unquestioning acceptance of the state as the vehicle to achieve socialism. Both deemed the state essential to the realization of their socialist policies. More seriously, they justified their advocacy of socialism in China on the grounds that socialism would contribute to the strength and efficiency of the new Republican state.

On the other hand, Shifu's own views also contained serious flaws. He oversimplified the socialist position on politics and the state by converting what was a problem for socialists into their identifying characteristic. He was able to establish a clear contrast between anarchism and socialism, moreover, only by imposing a misleading uniformity upon the diverse currents in European socialism (and anarchism). There is no question that he had a better grasp of the history of socialism in Europe than did his adversaries; nevertheless, his was a history of socialism seen

through anarchist eyes. He forced all other socialists into a collectivist box which he labeled state socialism. This he contrasted with communism, which he identified with anarchism. He saw Marxism in terms of its contemporary manifestations, which represented various modes of accommodation to the capitalist state, and completely ignored the revolutionary vision which had informed Marx's own writings, a vision that did not differ significantly from the anarchist one. Moreover, Shifu was himself selective in his use of history. While he pointed to their emphasis on the abolition of inheritance as proof that both Marx and Jiang were state socialists, he ignored the fact that it was Bakunin's insistence on the abolition of inheritance (which Marx had opposed as a petit-bourgeois measure) that had divided the Basel Congress of the First International in 1869. It is possible, of course, that Shifu was unaware of this particular issue, but he did display knowledge of other intricate aspectes of the conflicts within the International and it would be surprising if he did not have access to this rather conspicuous fact.[2]

Secondly, like Kropotkin himself, Shifu ignored that anarchists owed much in their social theory (the analysis of classes and capitalism) to Marxism (Miller, 1976: Ch. 12). The anarchists' contribution to socialist theory lay in their insistence on the need to recognize the autonomous power of institutions that articulated authority, especially the state. Marx had encompassed the state (at least on the surface) within the structure of social interests. He believed that with the socialist reorganization of society, the state itself would automatically undergo a transformation, and would "wither away" when the need for coercion disappeared. Anarchists pointed out, correctly, that the state (and other authoritarian institutions such as the family) had a life of their own apart from social relations. Therefore, they devoted their efforts to eradicating all authoritarian institutions to replace them with voluntary association. On the other hand, there was little in anarchist social theory that went beyond Marx's formulations. By ignoring this fact Shifu was able, quite unjustifiably, to claim the whole territory of socialism for anarchism.

Finally, Shifu missed the point about socialism in his insistence that socialism pertained only to the economy and that politics existed independently of society (which contradicted his own

belief that politics served class interest). The distinction of political from economic structure, if anything, is a characteristic of anarchism: While anarchists have not ignored the problem of social relations, they have been most conspicuous for their preoccupation with authority, especially political authority (Avrich, 1978: 83-84). The distinguishing feature of socialist social theory, on the other hand, lies in its integration of various aspects of existence into a unified analysis so that it is impossible to explain one aspect in isolation from the others. However socialists differed otherwise, they did not separate economic from social from political problems: the goal of economic change was to effect change in social and political relations as well. Shifu denied any significant role to politics, of course, but this basic socialist premise that economic, social and political relations are integrated was implicit in the theory that he himself upheld. His efforts to restrict the scope of socialism, therefore, are best understood in terms of his urge to prove the superiority of anarchism by endowing it with an all-encompassing scope that covered what socialism purportedly did not.

If anarchism has a broader scope than socialism, Marxist or otherwise, it is in the loyalty to the vision of humanity that all socialists have shared, without being equally constant in their loyalty. And if Shifu had an edge over his adversaries in these polemics, it was not due merely to his superior knowledge but, equally important, to his visionary consistency. Indeed Jiang and Sun did make statements about socialism that were indefensible in terms of vision or theory; but they did show some sensitivity to the realities around them. Shifu ignored almost totally the conditions within which he propagated his ideas. As with other anarchists, his views on revolution were ahistorical, based on certain universal premises about human beings and their relationship to society and politics. On the very rare occasions when he did refer to specific conditions in China, he conceded (without saying so) that the Chinese were not yet ready for the revolution he advocated. Thus Shifu—again like other anarchists—faced a dilemma that he was unwilling to acknowledge: that the revolu-

tion which would usher in an anarchist society must await the education of people to prepare them for anarchism, but that such education was impossible as long as bad society persisted. His anarchism provided a vision but offered no clear means to achieve it.

CONCLUSION

Anarchist-socialist differences reflected a basic difference in the conceptualization of the role of interest in society. Anarchists rejected the naturalness of interest, and viewed it as the fabrication of a social structure warped by power and exploitation. They believed that interest could be abolished if society were reconstituted in accordance with the natural cooperative inclinations of humanity. Socialists such as Sun and Jiang on the other hand, held a different view of interest, each for his own reason. Jiang, taking the pursuit of self-interest as a natural endowment of humanity, denied the possibility of abolishing it. Sun, while he rejected this premise, nevertheless thought that the pursuit of self-interest had accounted for the immense development of the West under capitalism and believed that, if kept within bounds, it could also contribute to China's developement.

The respective attitudes toward politics were functions of these premises concerning interest. Anarchists, who saw in politics one of the basic sources for the undermining of natural morality, viewed the abolition of politics and the abolition of "selfishness" as part and parcel of the same process. Sun and Jiang, on the other hand, saw in politics a means—the only means—to control private interest and bring it into the service of society, rather than of a privileged minority.

Socialists and anarchists were one in their belief that China required more than a political revolution, that society itself would have to undergo important changes if their goals were to be realized. But they held different views as to how this was to be achieved. Anarchists advocated a spontaneous revolution that

would abolish all existing institutions. Both Jiang and Sun, however, advocated a revolution the goal of which was to curtail precisely that eventuality. Jiang was muddy on this issue at the time of this debate, though he would state more explicit views at a later time (Jiang, 1923). Sun was very clear throughout his career that his policies were "hygienic," designed to forestall the sharpening of class conflict to the point where only a social upheaval could resolve it. Both sought to harmonize conflicting interests in society through the intermediacy of politics.

At issue was not merely the question of violence but the broader question of social conflict. The two must be distinguished not only because they refer to qualitatively different types of conflict but also because opposition to one did not necessarily mean opposition to the other. The socialist idea of conflict rooted political conflict in deep-seated differences of interest in society; as such, its immediate effect on Chinese politics was salutary because it created an awareness of the futility of the individual-oriented acts of political violence that characterized revolutionary politics in the early part of the century. Individual acts of heroism had no effect whatsoever on the basic fabric of society, where solutions to social problems must be sought. On the other hand, it raised the specter of large-scale social upheaval which proved to be more threatening in the long run. It was possible to espouse (even pursue) political violence and yet shy away from the threat of social conflict, as the case of Sun Zhongshan shows. Sun consistently opposed social conflict on the grounds that it would be subversive to national interest. He never rejected the use of violence as a means to unify China.

It was attitudes toward social conflict, not simply violence, that distinguished revolutionary from nonrevolutionary socialists. Moreover, the issue of social conflict was bound up with attitudes toward the achievement of the commonly shared vision of human liberation—which is not surprising, as social conflict was a necessary concomitant of the deep-rooted social transformation that the achievement of the vision presupposed. Shifu believed that human liberation and the pursuit of revolution are part and

parcel of the same process: The organization for revolution must express in embryonic form the future society to be created. Jiang and Sun both rejected this idea implicitly. While they were willing to incorporate social policies into their political programs, they postponed the achievement of a socialist society to a future so remote that the vision had no bearing on revolutionary strategy, which was shaped by more mundane considerations of political and economic necessity.

These two approaches to social change and revolution represented the two basic messages socialism conveyed to Chinese revolutionaries in the years before 1919: a vision of total revolutionary transformation, and a political theory that showed the way to reorganizing social interest to achieve greater equality and minimize conflict in society—a kind of political engineering. Regardless of the peculiarly Chinese coating these messages acquired in China, they reflected the two major currents in European socialism around the turn of the century. Sun and Jiang advocated diffuse socialisms that did not even reject basic institutions or ideas of capitalism, but they could point for support to trends in European socialism, which increasingly accommodated capitalism and strove to use the power of the state to regulate interest in society. As socialism lost its revolutionary vision, anarchists remained as the only socialists faithful to the original goals of socialist revolution.

On the other hand, anarchists were unable to convert their vision into a practical revolutionary strategy. This was especially a problem for the Chinese anarchists, who did not even have a constitutency for the social revolution that they proposed. Ultimately, they too had to fall back upon the argument that the people were not yet ready for anarchism.

This would change in the 1920s when Chinese society experienced large-scale mass mobilization. The late teens and early twenties were the heyday of anarchism in China. The revolutionization of Chinese society (accompanied by a general loss of faith in politics) increased receptivity to the anarchist argument. And anarchists proved better prepared than most in responding to

such spontaneous mobilization. Many of Shifu's disciples resurfaced at this time to provide leadership to the anarchist movement.

This time, however, anarchists found a more serious competitor on the left. After the establishment of the Communist Party in 1921, anarchists had to compete with the Communists for leadership of mass movements, and though they initially had an advantage over the Communists both in the student and the labor movements, by 1921-1922 they had already begun to lose ground to the latter. The Communists believed in social revolution as fervently as did the anarchists, but in their case social revolution meant the basis for a new kind of politics, not a substitute for it. Anarchists, philosophically suspicious of political organization, were not able to coordinate their activities sufficiently to compete with the Communists for any length of time. The Communists shared their vision (which deprived the anarchists of their major propaganda appeal) and had the edge over them in organization as well as in consciousness of the realities of power.

But while anarchists disappeared from the scene in the late twenties, the vision that they had propagated did not, for it was not a vision that was exclusively anarchist, even though Shifu had tried to present it as such. The vision, and the means to bring it into being, continued to provoke conflict among Chinese socialists. The disagreements over socialism in the early Republic first articulated a problem that has been a lasting source of friction in Chinese socialist thought, even though the protagonists and the terms of controversy have changed over time. Sun and Jiang agreed with Shifu on the socialist vision of humanity. But whereas Shifu believed that socialism required its adherents to pursue this vision as an imminent possibility, Sun and Jiang argued that the pursuit of the vision must await a remote time when society and humanity would be better prepared for it. The one led to revolution, the other did not.

The question was one that Mao Zedong also understood very well: could socialism be dissociated from its revolutionary vision and still be socialism? Mao displayed some ambivalence on this question. But his efforts to revolutionize Chinese society starting

in the late fifties (and culminating in the Cultural Revolution) were prompted by his conclusion that, divorced from its revolutionary vision, socialism must lose its distinctiveness as an ideology of human liberation. Whatever the merits or demerits of the Cultural Revolution, the uncertain future of socialism in China under Mao's successors, who have abandoned vision for more "pragmatic" considerations, would seem to bear out his doubts—and those of the anarchists who were the first to voice concern about the ultimate fate of a non- or an antirevolutionary socialism.

NOTES

1. The major articles Shifu wrote were "The Socialism of Sun Zhongshan and Jiang Kanghu" (Sun Yixian Jiang Kanghu zhi shehui zhuyi), (Min sheng no. 6, April 18, 1914); "The Socialist Party" (Lun Shehui dang), (Min sheng no. 9, May, 1914); "In Response to Jiang Kanghu" (Da Jiang Kanghu), (Min sheng no. 8, May 2, 1914); "Refuting Jiang Kanghu" (Bo Jiang Kanghu), (Min sheng no. 15, June 20, 1914), written in response to Jiang's "A Critique of a Critique of Socialism," that the latter wrote in the U.S.; and "The Anarchism of Jiang Kanghu" (Jiang Kanghu zhi wuzhengfuzhuyi), Min sheng no. 17, July 4, 1914). The rest of the discussion took place mostly in the form of comments on letters sent to *Min sheng*.

2. Shifu was aware, for example, of the intricacies surrounding the distinction between collectivism and communism in the International. At the time, Bakunin had described himself as a collectivist, which later gave rise to considerable confusion among anarchists. See Shifu (1927: 24), for Shifu's appreciation of this problem. The implications for anarchism are discussed in *Bakunin on Anarchy* (1972: 157-159). For Bakunin's views on the question of inheritance, see Cole (1954: 123-131).

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